

F
499
.G7L5



J Boardman

A

NEW YEAR'S SERMON,

DELIVERED IN

GRANVILLE, LICKING CO., OHIO,

ON THE

FIRST SABBATH IN JANUARY, 1838.

BY REV. JACOB LITTLE, A. M.
PASTOR OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.



COLUMBUS:
PRINTED BY CUTLER AND PILSBURY.
79 North High Street,
1838.

Faint, illegible text, possibly a date or reference number.

NEW YEAR'S SERMON.

Take ye the sum of all the Congregation.

NUMBERS, i. 2.

THE days and weeks of 1837, have swiftly passed away. They are now numbered with the dead. Agreeably to the custom of former years, to-day I call them back again to life for a review.

" 'Tis greatly wise to talk with our past hours,
And ask them what report they bore to heaven,
And how they might have borne more welcome news."

A watchman in Israel should, once a year, set a moral mirror before the face of his people. Twelve months is long enough to accumulate many unsightly spots, which, unless they are seen, will not be removed. Let it be ever so unpleasant, safety requires us to see ourselves as we are. If the lines of beauty and deformity are drawn with strict regard to truth, we may be humbled by seeing our defects, and encouraged by the goodness of God. Ten year's experience has shown us that the truths of new-year's sermons, do little harm and much good.

In this place, I usually mention a few things of a public nature. *Our Nation* has raised to the vice presidency, the man who could be the father of colored children, and scoffingly write down the Sabbath. The government have another year hired many thousands, in carrying and opening the mail. Public opinion requires those who have the control of boats and public houses, to be sufficiently destitute of moral principle, to sell ardent spirits. These, with stage drivers, the owners of stock in public conveyances, and the most of those with whom we trust our property, our friends, and our lives, when from home, must be men who can live in the open violation of the Sabbath. Time was, when those offices required nothing but what could be done by men of conscience. We talk about a country whose emoluments are equally open to all. This is not true, unless all are equally destitute of conscience. The past year, the groans of two millions in bonds, have as-

cended to heaven, and a minister of the gospel has been killed by four bullets passing through his body, while defending his press. Our avaricious hand still presses hard on the red man. We seize his land, and to deprive him even of the comforts of exile, his people are crowded into a miserable boat, and then drowned by the hundred in the dead of the night.

In the church, the past year has been one of controversy. The division in the Presbyterian church, and that on the subject of slavery, have agitated the public mind. Revivals of religion have been few, and the money pressure has retarded the benevolent institutions.

Our State follows up the sins of the nation. Our laws oppress the colored man. We have laws against gambling, profanity, and Sabbath breaking; but how many, even of our legislators break them. Our sea ports, lakes, great river, and five hundred miles of canal, are places where the Sabbath is violated by the sanction of public authority. As an item of good, the State has erected a Lunatic Asylum, and prepared the materials for another, for the Blind.

In proceeding to the religious history of the township, I shall imitate Moses, and *take the sum of all the congregation.*

The book of Numbers and other large portions of Scripture, are occupied with statistics. It would be easy to show that God has answered very important purposes by this part of the Bible. The science of figures in religion as well as in the world, is more and more needed to aid, and give definite views to the progress of the Redeemer's kingdom. Holiness to the Lord is to be inscribed on this science, and it will be powerful to pull down the strong holds of Satan.

Vices in the township. In former years, I had occasion to mention balls, mobs, and other out-breaking sins, which I am happy to say, come not within the history of the past year. Still the tide of iniquity flows broad and deep.—250 adults* dare take God's name in vain.—437 visit, work, or journey on the Sabbath.—260 habitually desert the house of God.—112 families use, as a drink, ardent spirits. We have 16 drunkards, one distillery, and three or four places where poison may be bought as a beverage, and have consumed more than 1000 gallons the past year.—846 adults are not professors of religion, and most of them have no hopes that they are Christians. To remedy these evils, I place first,

Temperance Societies. Two years ago, these contained 1440 members, 1000 in the township. Once the past year, efforts were made to procure new signatures, but probably more have removed than have

* I use the word *adult* as embracing all persons over 14 years of age

joined. The Society that abstains from all that can intoxicate, contains 300. Of our 348 families, 236 use no ardent spirits. About seven years ago, the church adopted a rule to receive to our communion, none but such as would bind themselves to abstain from the use and traffic in ardent spirits. Three aged people are the only persons in the church who are not pledged to entire abstinence. This makes the church a temperance society of more than 400 members, who will be likely to live up to their pledge. We once suspended a member from the church for selling whisky.

The *Maternal Association* consists of 70 members, and 160 children. They read 24 "Mother's Magazines," which are well circulated. It is one of the best attended, and most useful institutions in the place.

Sabbath Schools in connection with this congregation, have, the past year, been instructed in ten different places; embracing 65 teachers, and 402 scholars. This includes the infant school, and two over the township lines. We have had no schools the past year in the north-east and south-east corners of the township. In former years, I have reported some who went out as Sabbath school missionaries. I am sorry, that to-day, I can report none such, and no increase to the library. The scholars under 14 years of age, are required to commit the appointed lessons. The number of those who have committed the appointed lessons * is 74—more than one fifth of the whole. I read these names, to let the children know that the superintendent, minister, and all will take notice when they do well.

The *Bible Class* the past year has been attended only in town, and as formerly, has embraced only adults.—154 have attended; little more than half as many as when the classes in the districts were attended.—78 from the time of their joining the class, have attended twenty or more recitations, and 4 are supposed to be without hopes.—48 have attended fifty or more lessons, and 3 are without hopes; 18 have attended one hundred or more, and 1 is without hope. Neglecting the classes on the streets the past year, is a very serious evil. The whole number who have studied the Word of God the past year, through the medium of the Bible class, and the Sabbath school, is 556. The *catechism* has been recited on the Saturday following each of the four Sacraments. Several have recited through the Assembly's Shorter catechism.

The *School Teachers*, furnished by the township the past year, are 60; of whom 48 are professors of religion, and about the same number prayed in school. This congregation furnished from 40 to 50 teachers.

* Their names were read.

More than 40 different persons have taught the schools of the township, and most of them have exerted a decidedly good religious influence. All but two or three of 16 or 18 teachers, within about a mile, are professors of religion. They have under their care more than 500 scholars.

Our *Classical School* has embraced 30 professors of religion, and 20 school teachers. Our *Female Academy* has contained 74 professors of religion, and 39 school teachers. Both of these, with the primary school, have shared in the revival.—15 adults in the township have not learning enough to read the Bible ; but none of these are natives of the place.

Periodical papers. The township has taken, the past year, 694, emanating from 120 presses ; 391 of these are religious, of which this congregation take 288.

Religious Tracts. The monthly distribution has been continued the past year, but not with the same vigor as in some former years.—The church made a present of 500 copies of “Baxter’s Call,” to the impenitent of the township ; the distribution of which, was finished early in the year. During the summer, Mr. Wood sold among us 1000 volumes of the Society’s publications ; and from 75 to 100 “Dodridge’s Expositors” have been taken by the people. A member of the church has twice called on the 146 families of Liberty township, and distributed 8000 or 9000 pages of Tracts. He found but one family who refused them. There was, last summer, but one district school, and no Sabbath school. I have now, for the first time, obtained some facts in regard to reading the Bible. We have 307 souls between the ages of 12 and 21—48, or about one-sixth, have read the Bible through in course.

Public worship. This township contains 1,992 souls, only 129 more than it did five years ago ; 1,414 are adults, of whom 1,154 attend worship. One street has 71 adults, all but one of whom visit the house of God. The number that habitually neglect public worship is 260—100 less than it was five years ago. Fifteen hundred dollars has much improved the meeting-house, and added 100 sittings below. Still families and individuals have come to the place who would attend worship with us, could they secure a slip. I hope the present singing school will make amends for what we have lost by the omission of last winter. My health has been such, that I have lost no Sabbath the past year, and my brother supplying during my absence in the summer, you have not been left destitute a single Sabbath. In former new-year’s sermons, I have, in this connection, mentioned the number of doctrinal sermons added to my course. The past two years, I have only added a few

sermons on the subjects and mode of Baptism. Owing to absence, and the revival, I have had much less system and study than would otherwise have been for your advantage.

Social meetings. The church have supported from 15 to 20 of these through the year. Some of these are concerts, conferences, inquiry meetings, maternal association, male and female prayer meetings in town, and on the streets. A little band of the church have met through the year, on the floor over the inquiry meeting, to pray for its success.

Pastoral visitation. My standing promise is, to visit all who visit me at the house of God.—170 families worship in this house, about 20 of which are over the township lines. I have visited nearly or quite all these the past year, and my brother visited many families. Ten years ago, when the church was 100, something like justice could be done to this very important part of ministerial duty ; but now it cannot receive the attention it merits.

Family worship. Of 348 families, 158 attended family worship ; of which 103 are in our connection ; 16 began this year. It was once before stated in a new-year's sermon, that one of the males of the church, the head of a family, did not maintain family worship ; the reports mention two, this year.

The Church. There are 212 souls in the township who were baptized in infancy, who are not known to have hopes that they are Christians. But 33 of these have arrived to the age of 14. When we consider what a proportion of our 1414 adults were baptized in infancy, this is a remarkable fact. The township has 568 who belong to churches, leaving 846 that do not ; 28 other persons have been members of churches. The number of this class of persons has decreased one half within five years. The town has 505 adults—244 professors of religion. The proportion of professors of religion would be greater, did we omit the scholars from abroad, and reckon only permanent citizens.

The Baptists, Methodists, Episcopalians, and Whitfield Methodists, have, in the township, 211 members. Our church has dismissed the past year 19 ; 2 have died, and 1 has been suspended, and by confession restored. There has been added by profession, 80—42 males, and 38 females, and 9 by letter ; in all, 89. This will make the present number 415. If we add to these, 10 who have taken letters, but not yet united with other churches, and who, in fact, are yet under our care, our number will be 425. Of these, 357 are within the township lines, and 100 in town. The names of the dismissed, are———(Names omitted.) The following have seldom if ever worshipped with us, the

past year.—(Names omitted.) In all, 18. One of these last, is on a foreign Mission, another is sick, and a third lives where there is no church yet organized.

But we feel extremely sorry that others should go from us and not take letters, and join where they live. Besides scholars, there are, in this place, as many as 20 who belong to churches, who have not presented their letters, and we have another 20 abroad, making 40 members who stand between us and other churches of the same denomination. It is our business to look after those who go from us, and neglect their duty. This is the more important, as so many emigrate from us. At one time, during two years, we lost 76 members, mostly by dismission to the west. Some have gone from us, acted important parts in other churches, and done us, and the cause, honor. Others have gone away, and by standing aloof from the churches, have injured us and themselves.

I hope these remarks may be felt, by those who may remove in 1838. I do not wish them to apply to the scholar, who merely goes or comes for a term. Of the late revival, we have received but two scholars from abroad.

The adult baptisms the past year have been 28—infant, 36; in all, 64. The oldest member of the church is Lewis Sturges, aged 81. One is 9, another 11, and several 12 years of age.

The *Moral Reform Societies* have 133 males, 138 females—in all, 271. They read 37 papers.

The *Anti-Slavery Societies* have 83 males, 37 females—in all 120. They read 45 papers. Anti-slavery notices have been read in public, prayer has been offered for the oppressed in our social meetings, and the cause of the colored man has been discussed in our meeting-house and lecture room. Early in the year, I called the church together, to express their feelings. In March, I “*came out*” in more than XX articles. I adopted the doctrines of the Anti-slavery constitution, but expressed fears lest our strong sympathy for many leading Abolitionists who embrace lax notions of theology and learning, might lead us to adopt permanent errors, that would remain after the discussion on the subject of slavery was ended. In addition to these two meetings, we have had eight lectures and two sermons by Mr. Weed—two county Anti-slavery meetings—two Colonization meetings, and one in behalf of the “Wilberforce colony.” Besides concerts, this will make 17 meetings in behalf of the colored man—generally very long, and all without disturbance. When party feeling ran high, I replied to those who wished me to preach on the subject, that “as soon as the fever was off, I would administer tonics. I intended to handle the elements as soon as they were

sufficiently cool." When I *came out*, I mentioned preaching a course of sermons. A vote of the county meeting urges the same duty, which by this time, I would gladly perform. The county Society, certainly, do not wish to take away the pastor's prerogative of timing things according to his best judgment.

I was absent in the summer ; the revival has occupied my attention in the fall. After you have heard as much as I should put into 30 or 40 sermons, with the State convention in expectation, it would have crushed all sympathy for the slave, to have crowded another series of discourses on slavery into 1837. It will become me, if I ever get the floor, not to speak as lecturer, but as pastor, administering both reproof and advice to all parties. Had I space now to begin, it is doubtful, whether I feel kind enough to do the thing in the best manner, and whether either party are prepared to hear their faults with a Christian temper. It is my sober conviction that I am in advance of both parties in this region ; and I burn for an opportunity to get the floor, under circumstances favorable to telling all I believe, and all I feel.

Monies paid to various objects. Tract Society, \$430 00. Am. B. C. F. M., \$402. Am. Ed. Society, \$260. Maternal Association, \$20. Colored Schools, \$73. Am. S. S. Union, \$56. Col. Society, \$12. Mor. Ref. Soc., \$33. A. H. M. Soc., \$146. Anti-slavery Soc. \$214. Oberlin College, \$100. Wilberforce Colony, \$87. Meeting-house repairs, \$1000. Boarding-house, (part by obligations against individuals,) \$6,500. Total, \$9,333 00.

Some of these items were not entirely paid by our own denomination. And the past has been a year when others have contributed largely to their own objects. The subscription to the meeting-house of \$1400, was raised in two days.

Deaths. During the past year, 35 have died—13 adults—22 children. About one third of the deaths were by the measles. In January died 2, February 1, March 1, April 2, May 4, June 7, July 5, August 4, September 3, October 4, November 1, December 1.

The church has some years lost 5, 7, and one year 11. The past year, it has lost but two. The town plat has a population of 660, and no person died from April 1836 to April 1837.

Progress of society for ten years. Ten years ago this day, I preached my first new year's sermon in Granville. The effect was what it would be any where. I was not believed. Till men count numbers, they will never believe that the statistics of vice, of death and other things are as large as they are. As I shall not be likely to preach a half, nor even a quarter century sermon, I will here mention

some of the results of the past ten years. During this time, our population has increased only 268, little more than the scholars from abroad. It was stated ten years ago, that we had 6 distilleries, 40 drunkards, and drank 10,000 gallons of ardent spirits. Even church members took loads of grain to the distillery, and brought home barrels of whisky to keep their families healthy and good natured.

Through the instrumentality of Temperance Societies, the consumption of ardent spirits has diminished nine tenths. Ten years ago, we paid \$500 for balls. For two or three years past, I think we have not had any. Many that were then profane swearers, drunkards, and Sabbath breakers are now members of churches and living exemplary lives ; but as the preceding statistics show, these items of vice are still frightfully large. The Bible Society was formed in 1817, Missionary Associations in 1827, and all the other benevolent institutions since that time. In 1827, all denominations were united in one Sabbath school of 20 teachers, and 140 scholars. Now each of the four societies has its own Sabbath school ; and the one connected with this church has 60 teachers and more than 400 scholars.

The Bible Class began with 60 adult youths ; and increased, till, for two or three years, it numbered between 200 and 300 scholars—248 have attended twenty or more recitations, of whom 14 entered the class with, and 20 are now without hopes ; leaving 214 to have entertained hopes during the ten years. Many others became hopefully pious, who attended a shorter time—79 attended between fifty and one hundred recitations, and 32 over one hundred. Of those who attended between twenty and fifty lessons, one in every 12 is without hope. Of those who have attended over 100, one in 32 is without hope.

In 1827, 51 families were without a Bible. The destitute have been supplied every year since. The township furnished in 1827, 45 school teachers, of whom, 6 prayed in school. In 1832, five years ago, 56 teachers, of whom, 35 prayed in school. The past year, 60 teachers, of whom, 48 prayed in school.

The township took in 1827, 26 religious periodicals. In 1832, 143. In 1837, 391. Professors of religion in the township in 1827, 260. In 1832, 440. In 1837, 568. Praying families in 1827, 89. In 1832, 166. In 1837, 158. The number of the church in 1827, 115. In 1832, 338. In 1837, 425. Infant baptisms during the ten years, 266. Adults, 114. Total, 380.

There are now of the original members, who were formed in Massachusetts, thirty-one years ago, seven in the church, are still living. Of those who were re-organized into the church in 1827, 68. Such as re-

main in this church of the revival of 1808, 16—that of 1822, 9—that of 1823, 47—that of 1831, 63—and that of 1837, 74.

For the last ten years, the church has dismissed 137, suspended 4, and excommunicated 2—46 have died, 11 gone to other churches, and 12 come from them to us. We have received by letter, 102—by profession, 354. In all, 456. We have examined no person till the third month after conversion, nor received any till the fourth. During these five revivals of the last ten years, the alarm has echoed from various quarters,—“They will soon turn back.” By this time of day, we have some facts on the subject. Mr. Nettleton, speaking of New England revivals, once said, fewer apostates join the church from them, than from those coming in at other times. This was said before the birth of high pressure measures. Of the six suspended and expelled in ten years, three suppose they were converted in other connections. This will leave three from the addition of 354 members. If faithful discipline required us to double the number, it would still be small.

To see what God has done for us, we have only to go back ten years and see what was then the condition of these windows, doors, slips, stoves, bell, lecture room, schools, and this people. We then met, a part of the time, in a school-room on the Sabbath; and a *parlor* was sufficient for the conference. For a few years past, it is believed, that not so many as five constant attendants on public worship for five years, who are 21 years of age, can be found, who are not hopeful converts.

The Deaths in the township, were, in 1827, 24—1828, 24—'29, 22—'30, 23—'31, 22—'32, 28—'33, 19—'34, 85—'35, 37—'36, 39—'37 35—total 358; between 32 and 33 per year. No scholar from abroad has yet died. I have ascertained the mortality of four inland towns in New-England, and it is greater than this, if we except 1834, which was the sickly year.

Ministerial trials. I can only have time to bring to your remembrance ten subjects, which, in as many years, have filled up my days and nights with care and solicitude.

The division in the church, commenced previous to 1827, and was not healed for two or three years after.

Arminianism, which remained more or less in the church down to the time the eight sermons were preached on predestination.

Infant Baptism was neglected, and the example of the officers of the church was pleaded.

Fashionable amusements, shielded the youth from seriousness and were countenanced by most of the parents.

Hasty admission to the church was the practice approved by the church, till after 1828.

Our Temperance Society, being the oldest in the region, if not this side the mountains, had to struggle with public opinion.

Camp meetings and kindred measures.

Obstacles in erecting the Academy.

These things have now passed, and there is but one opinion among us respecting them. We are still exposed to difficulties arising from the

The division of the Presbyterian Church, and the

Controversy on Slavery.

My trials on these ten things have been what none but a pastor can appreciate. The breaking of my windows in 1828, cost me nothing, in comparison with my labor, care, and anxiety, to unite the church, to lead it unitedly into temperance and other good things, to avoid the evils which threatened it, and to keep it separate from alloy. Sometimes I have stood against the views of the whole church, sometimes half, and at others, I have not been so certain that I was right, as both parties were that I was wrong. More than once I have felt certain that a little haste, or a false step, would throw things back five years. In the temperance cause, and often when I most felt my weakness, I felt strong enough to divide the church, and throw things back to 1827. I have not prayed enough, but I have planned and toiled as much as poor human nature would bear. When I review those trials and dangers we have passed, I am surprised at the present peace and prosperity of this church; and the only reason I can give for it is, *hitherto the Lord hath helped us.*

NUMBERS i. 2.

Take ye the sum of all the Congregation.

THIS command, authorised Moses and other inspired men to introduce into the word of God, a large quantity of statistics. From this, I infer the propriety of setting before the people, once a year, a statistical view of their moral condition. The discourse this afternoon, will include the account of the revival, remarks on the statistics of the forenoon, and the obituaries of such church members as have died the past year.

The Revival. The best time to judge of the character of revivals, is

by looking at their effects when they are past. You enjoyed a great revival in 1808, two years after the settlement of the place; another in 1818; a third in 1822; and five during the time I have been your pastor—in all, 8.

The revival of 1828 lasted a year, and added to the church 79—on one Sabbath 46. The revival of 1831, lasted six months, and added to the church 100—67 in one day. The revival of 1832 added to the church 25. The revival of 1834 added 24. The revival of 1837 has thus far added 74 in one day.

We gave some facts in the forenoon as to the character of these members. Take from the church all that these revivals have added, and you will take away the men who support prayer meetings, objects of benevolence, build the academy, boarding house, and are the ground work and preparation of future revivals. At the commencement of the year, there was much of the remains of the alienation on the slavery question. The church came together and expressed their feelings—the ladies united the two societies which had acted as rivals; the two parties were addressed, and requested to yield certain points, which was cheerfully done. Six or seven sermons were preached on brotherly love. These things and others of the kind, produced a general cordiality of feeling. A few individuals were disposed still to live in a state of irritation; but this has never been true of the church at large. Inquiry meetings were held every Monday evening through the year—conversions occurred from time to time, but more frequently towards fall. The services of the Sabbath during the summer were well received, and had a good effect, on what appeared afterwards. It was mentioned in the new year's sermon, two years ago, that the impenitent were more numerous in the house of God than they had been since 1830; and they have been increasing all the past year.

In addition to the present, to the unconverted, of 500 Baxter's Call, and the distribution of 1000 evangelical volumes of the Tract Society, there was an unusual spirit of prayer for the Sabbath school children.

Previous to the September sacrament, it was thought the state of things would warrant our holding a meeting longer than the usual preparatory lecture. After all that had passed in the country of various descriptions of measures where revivals seem merely to burn over the land and produce little or no good, we were at a loss what course to take. We were fearful of teaching the people to put too great a value on extraordinary means, or to trust in a periodical religion, that goes up and down with certain meetings; these difficulties were felt by the people as well as their pastor. Instead of bringing strangers here to preach

and kindle foreign fires, it was thought that an internal circulation ought to be waked up which would be more likely to last. The preaching for a Sabbath or two was, that the people should make special efforts to prepare themselves for a holy life. One week previous to the meeting, a private fast day was appointed by the church. A committee of thirty, after uniting in prayer, went, two and two, to the houses of all the members that day, and conversed and prayed with them. Sunrise prayer meetings were appointed in all the districts, a few days previous. Before the meeting, which lasted four days, there was a general melting of hearts through the church, which showed that they were ready for the favor of God. The only evidence of unusual interest, was the crowd and great stillness while going to and from the house of God. About twenty had previously attended as inquirers; and on the second day of the meeting, it was hoped others would join them. A definite time to begin to serve God was insisted on, and people were urged to make that time *now*. Those who were resolved *now* to seek an interest in Christ, were requested to go to the conference room, and the church to remain and pray for them. The choir were requested to sing five verses—and at the close of the third my brother was to leave the pulpit as a signal for those going to the inquiry meeting, to follow him. The impenitent were entreated to come to a conclusion, whether they would *now* seek religion, while the first three verses were being sung; and the church were requested to pray during the same time that they might come to a right conclusion. Here was an interval of unparalleled interest; those that could, sung through the stanzas: every where was stillness and anxiety. While the souls of parents were agonizing for an immediate blessing, the contest going on in the hearts of the impenitent was discovered by their changing countenances. Perhaps parents never more earnestly prayed, or more solemnly gave their children to God. Not having seen a tear till this time, it was doubtful whether many would attend the inquiry meeting. When my brother arose, 130 followed him. Some rose up quickly as if in haste, and suddenly started. One young man thrust his head out of the window to prevent being moved by seeing others go out. Now the tears of parents flowed in torrents—some waited till the five verses were nearly completed, and then started with a kind of violence. The object of this movement was to bring halting minds to a decision. The most of these afterwards became hopeful converts—some that day, some the next, and some several days after; and some were afterwards awakened. The great majority of the conversions took place in the month of September. By the middle of October, 100 had expressed a hope.

Our classical school shared in the revival; but till this time, the Ladies' Academy appears not to have been much affected. They had a fast day the first week in December, attended by very peculiar effects. It was believed that more than 20 that day submitted to God. If we except the schools, more than half the converts are males. When the number was 80, nearly two-thirds were males. None have been received to the church who began to hope later than September. We cannot say how many of those who have since begun to hope, will join the church.—74 have united—16 began family prayer, and others have begun to attend public worship.

One thing in this revival has strikingly reminded me of 1828. In the previous difficulties, some violent persons were disposed to say, that God would not bless their opponents. When harmony was restored, God blessed each party, and all rejoiced that it was so. Some of the same sort of things were said in the late disaffection. But God seems to have scattered his blessings without distinction of party lines. Both the children of abolitionists and their opponents are converted. The same thing is true of ministers and churches. Dr. Wilson of Athens, and Mr. Putnam of Circleville, have had revivals the past year; and the same is true of Mr. Higbie, and Mr. Madison on the other side. When all feel right, God will bless all.

Another fact in this revival is, the converts are very much composed of those, well trained at home, and in the Sabbath school. When I was saying, in former years, so many were faithful attendants on the Sabbath school and Bible class, I was saying, that not far in advance there will be a great revival.

We often read in the papers, that such a man came and preached, and the result was a revival. This preacher only put on the top stone. Others, so far as human agency is concerned, laid the foundation and built the wall. Had I as good records, I could probably make out as favorable results of the Sabbath school, as I made of the Bible class.

If God grants five more revivals in the next ten years, and I may judge the future by the past, I can tell in nine cases out of ten, if not nineteen out of twenty, who will be the subjects. They are those who obey parents, get the appointed lessons, and exhibit the same punctuality in the Bible class and public worship. God has always loved to bless this class of persons, and he always will. Persons thus trained, are the most likely to obtain a hope, and the least likely to be deceived by a false hope.

Remarks on the statistics of the forenoon. In addition to what I have just said of the Sabbath school and Bible class, I hope in 1838 the

Bible, catechism, evangelical volumes, and the religious periodicals, will receive due attention. The school teachers who go out this year, should feel that they are missionaries to promote religious reading, as well as to do all other things that would be implied in watching for souls. Very few who were ever constant attendants have deserted public worship; and from what was said in the forenoon, it appears that very few adults attend five years without being hopefully converted. Here is another fact that I hope will encourage many to make the experiment the next five years.

While I was describing the growth of the church from one revival to another, and our collections, some may have felt emotions of pride: if so, recollect the Sabbath breakers, profane swearers, and those who neglect public and family worship, which were enumerated. Let boasting be excluded till these dark sins are wiped from our escutcheon. Our church has a disproportionate number which cannot be retained without the extraordinary favor of heaven. The proportion of our denomination is so much less in the country around, that removals continually diminish us. When the revival of 1828 raised the church to 200, we had a proportionate number—every addition since has made our number more and more disproportionate. I do not say this to prove there is not room for increase; there are yet materials; our 846 impenitent would make two more great churches, without taking one from the others. God is able to do still greater things than these—he will bestow as fast as the people are ready to receive.

While a small church need strength for efficient discipline, a large one has other difficulties—a man may neglect duty, and hide among the multitude—each one may throw the responsibility on the whole, so that like the Catholic rule of faith, it is not found in Popes, or councils, or any where else.

When we were small, we were careful of each other's feelings, and every where took pains to aid the cause, for it was weak. As numbers increase, these feelings pass away, and we feel too strong to be cautious. Besides our common enemy, we must be aware that many long to see a division among us—some to fatten on the spoils, and others from hatred to the cause, long to see the scenes of 1823–24,–25 acted over again. While we should guard against foes without, we may suffer as much from party spirit among ourselves. One more difficulty is, our foreign relations. We are *Congregationalists*—our Articles of Faith were formed in Massachusetts in olden time—and we pretend to hold the same doctrine and order, that have distinguished our *fathers* for 300 years—we believe their principles lay close to the foundation of our free

government, and the great institutions of benevolence, that are the glory of our country. On one side, is the Presbyterian church, which, ten years ago, received you under its care. The dominant party in that church have laid violent hands on Congregationalism, bringing it into disrepute, by writing and speeches. They have proceeded to cut you off to cure heresy; and if I do not follow the party in power, I expect to be thrown over with the excinded synods within one year. This I regret, as I do not wish to trust myself, nor my people alone; we wish not to belong *nowhere*.

On the other side we are beset with dangers no less to be dreaded. Ultra Newschool men have attacked the clergy and doctrines of our fatherland, laid hold of the name of *Congregational*, and under it, formed churches whose creed has neither election, predestination, or what our fathers would call Calvinism. This side, by our treatment from the other, lays strong claims to our sympathies. While we are thus passing between Scylla and Charybdis, it becomes steersman, sailors and all on board, to be united, on the look-out, to use all the wisdom they have, or we shall break on the rocks, or be swallowed by the whirlpool.

On the much disputed question of slavery, I have only to say, I wish both parties would examine with all the coolness they can, and see if they have not, up to this time, some unchristian and uncharitable feelings; and also try to see, if they may not possibly be wrong, at least in some things.

The five hundred scholars in this immediate vicinity, much increase the responsibility of this church. How important that we should make fashionable a high standard of morals and religion. Where other sects out number us, we often complain that the fashion of keeping the Sabbath, and various other things, is not as it should be. Let us not deserve the same reproach. Our academies will require all our wisdom and energy. Let the wicked one but introduce a division among us, and that boarding-house will rot down, unfinished. In looking over the events of the past ten years, there should be great mourning for our mis-spent time, and great sins; and great gratitude for the unparalleled goodness of God to us as a people.

Obituaries. While God has been good to us the past year, in sending us a shower from heaven, he has also been good in sparing our lives. Only two of the church have died. One in 200. * Thus we bid farewell to our two departed brothers.

In the past ten years, I have read to you the Obituaries of 46. It is

* A sketch of their lives was read.

pleasant to reflect that their sun set in peace, and that they left a good report. Among them was the wisdom of age and the beauty of sanctified youth. We love to call them back to remembrance. They were interested in our social meetings. They sung and prayed with us. They have passed the great change, from time to eternity, and are awaiting our arrival. What numbers of us will follow them before the next ten years have passed away? 46 will make almost half that were then in the church.

In 1837, the township died at the rate of one in every 56, or one in every ten days. The coming year, once in ten days, the name of each one will be put in with 2000 others, and one be drawn out for death. Time never recedes. We are irresistibly drawn 365 days nearer the grave. The bell will every few days toll for one of us. The unseen hand of death has not been idle the past year. It will be busy the year to come. The moment is fixed when it will strike you and me. Could I now call such of your names as will be in eternity next January, with what interest should we look at them? How should we think they ought to live the months and days, that intervene between this, and the appointed hour? So let us all live the future days of life.

This is a time to make new resolutions. My impenitent friends! be persuaded to give no more years to sin. What years of guilt are now filed against you by the recording angel! Will you add another? Could those who have died the past year return to day to their former seats, how would they urge you to give your heart to God in 1838. But you may not live to see it close. I bid farewell to such as will never hear another new year's sermon. Others will see another new year's sun, and come together to hear you numbered with the dead. But you will lie low, and heed it not.

If you die impenitent, you may then look back to these seats and these invitations of the gospel, but it will be too late. Your condition will be eternally fixed. Let us now begin a holy life. I consecrate myself, my people, my all, to the service of God. Let us begin the year by being entirely his; and then, whether living or dying, this will be a happy new year.*

*In the subsequent days of the week, the church meets the pastor in six divisions, viz: those over 60, 50, 40, 30, 20 and under 20. Three other divisions meet the same week, viz: those who have hopes—inquirers, and the children. In these meetings, each church member recounts his dealings of God with him the past year, and hears such advice as the case may require.



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 014 750 265 5